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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS TAKE AIM AT PM MALIKI AND HIS
TRIBAL SUPPORT COUNCILS

REF: HILLAH 74

CLASSIFIED BY: Kenneth Hillas, PRT Leader, Babil PRT, Dept of
State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

(U) This is a PRT Babil reporting cable.

11. (C) In an August 31 meeting with the Babil PRT team leader, Babil's Provincial Council (PC) Deputy Chair, Dr. Nea'ma, a Da'wa member, discussed Governor Salam's (ISCI) attempts to subvert Prime Minister (PM) Maliki's efforts to create tribal support councils by starting a rival ISCI-backed tribal council. In an attempt to counter the PM's tribal organizing initiative in southern provinces, Governor Salam hosted officials from ten provincial governments (governors, provincial council chairs or their deputies) at an August 31 conference in Hillah, ostensibly to promote more power for provincial governments. (A banner hung above the entrance to the meeting hall proclaimed "Activating the Provincial Councils.") Although the PC Chair, Mohammed al Massaoudi, was the nominal host of the event, Governor Salam actually undertook the organization and controlled the program. We understand that the Diwaniyah (Qadasiya) Governor gave encouragement to Governor Salam.

12. (C) According to Dr. Nea'ma, ISCI leader Amar Al-Hakim was involved in this initiative from the beginning. The primary conclusion/recommendation from the conference was "that the provinces needed to oppose the PM's tribal support councils and to set up their own. The only two voices in opposition to this recommendation were the Karbala Governor and Dr. Nea'ma (both Da'wa). Nea'ma said the governor and ISCI planned to use the PC's in the south to pressure the PM-backed support councils. He characterized this development as a "disaster" and a prime example of why the provinces are in "deep need" of provincial elections. PC Chairman Mohammed was reportedly surprised when he found out at the meeting's agenda was about the TSCs and not giving Provincial Council's more power.

13. (C) An alternative tribal council, supported by Governor Salam/ISCI in opposition to the PM's support councils, will be held in Hillah on September 4. The PRT has made clear that the USG does not support this effort and is not taking sides on how tribal shiekhs wish to organize themselves.

SIGNATURE